Battle Command Insights

by Lieutenant Colonel James E. Zanol

Battle Command means action. It means accomplishing the mission at least cost to your troops in land operations — the tough, unforgiving arena that is land combat. It requires of battle commanders a lifetime of practice and study to prepare for those minutes, hours, days, or years of execution in actual operations. Actual battle is the great auditor of how well-prepared the battle commander really is. That arena is no place for amateurs.[1]

-GEN Frederick M. Franks

A successful OPFOR consolidates on the objective.

This paper is a collection of thoughts on what I've learned about battle command as one of the OPFOR motorized rifle regiment commanders. As the commander of 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, I led the 125th Guards Tank Regiment during force-on-force battles at the National Training Center (NTC). In two years of command, I led the regiment through 11 rotations as the MRR commander, including the Advanced Warfighting Experiment, encompassing 24 regimental missions and over 30 MRB defense missions. Along the way, I have made observations that I believe are relevant to effective battle command and the orchestration of all battlefield operating systems. I have had the privilege to lead trained and motivated soldiers through repetitive, realistic, and challenging training. Only this kind of experience, which I enjoyed as an OPFOR commander, builds in a leader battle command skills. My experience has helped me develop and refine my ability to visualize the battle as a commander and increased my appreciation of the art of the possible.

Prior to my experience in the 11th Armored Cavalry, I could more readily discern potential difficulties associated with courses of action than I could identify the advantages gained through bold maneuver. Repetitive training, standard procedures, battle drills, and a clear, universally understood concept of the operation are what permits the NTC OPFOR to take advantage of fleeting, unpredictable battlefield opportunities. Identifying, deciding to act on those opportunities, then leading, is the essence of battle command at the tactical level.

The purpose of this article is to share my observations on battle command. At the brigade and battalion level, battle command is inextricably linked to the effective integration of battlefield operating systems. In order to see himself, the enemy and terrain, identify possibilities, and issue orders to defeat the enemy, the commander must understand the systems at his disposal. This is done while always being mindful of his tactical purpose. Although, I've organized this article by battlefield operating systems, the emphasis must be on integrating those systems into a coherent concept of operation.

The OPFOR Regiment

The leadership and responsibility of the small unit leaders at the squad and platoon, the perfection of the training of these units must be given greater emphasis and less emphasis placed on the operation of the larger units such as battalion, regiment, and division. The division will succeed only as the platoon succeeds.[2]

-MG Ernest N. Harmon

The OPFOR regiment has a distinct way of fighting. When a new soldier, NCO, or officer joins the OPFOR regiment, he learns the SOPs, battle drills, TTPs, field craft, and, most importantly, the warrior ethos of the regiment. Battlefield skill is paramount. Excellence, aggressiveness, and success are expected. The effect is extremely powerful. Every soldier in the regiment shares a common understanding on how the unit fights, what actions must happen, what is possible given the mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available. That common understanding comes from monthly tough and challenging training on the NTC battlefield. The result is — as you would expect — trained, confident and aggressive soldiers, crews, platoons, and companies. Soldiers in the regiment know, understand, follow, and train to stable and tested SOPs. Trained soldiers and leaders, a stable SOP, commonly understood doctrine and tactics, and tough, challenging, repetitive training are the foundations for effective maneuver.

The end state is a unit capable of responding immediately to orders in a fluid environment. Our level of training permits leaders to focus on execution rather than the development of detailed plans and orders.

Battle Command

> *Battle command is the art of battle decision-making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions. It includes visualizing the current state and future states, formulating concepts of operations to get from one to the other, and doing so at least cost. It also includes assigning missions, prioritizing and allocating resources, selecting the critical time and place to act, and knowing how and when to make adjustments during the fight.*[3]
>
> *FM 100-5*

Leave it to Army doctrine writers to make such a passionless definition of the art of command, an otherwise extremely personal, cognitive, emotional, and professional act. Battle command is best described by terms like *coup d'oeil* or *fingerspitzengefuhl*. It is insight into the right action to take immediately and in the near future based on the commander's personal estimate of the situation. The estimate is based on the lifetime of practice and study as described by GEN Franks in the introduction. Extensive maneuver experience is the essential element of battle command. Commanders must have the ability to envision the development of the fight in time and space.

The commander's leadership style must create an environment conducive to effective battle command. The commander must remain calm and confident under pressure. A cool head leads to an accurate commander's estimate and coherent battle orders that are relevant to the situation. A calm demeanor is contagious and permits subordinates to focus on the mission.

Effective communications are equally important. The battle command radio "net" must stay clear and efficient, not cluttered with inaccurate, incomplete reports or over-detailed and specific instructions. Because subordinates understand the commander's concept of the operation, they can separate important information from potential distracters. When the battle commander sets and sustains sharp, succinct communications within his unit, command and control becomes a combat multiplier and is a key factor in allowing the unit to act faster than the enemy can respond.

Yet, effective communication will not remove the inherent uncertainty of battle. Commanders must accept risk and take decisive action. Bold action taken when you are uncertain will most often succeed because the enemy probably doesn't know what's happening either. Often, the commander must act when information is incomplete, the situation confused and uncertain. He must develop a personal tolerance to friction in order to maintain the mental energy and imagination to see tactical opportunities. Let the TAC and S3 fight while you think, make decisions, and issue orders. If you are controlling the movement of individual vehicles, you are not commanding your unit.

Know yourself. Every unit, leader, and soldier has strengths and weaknesses. Know your strengths. Every unit fights most effectively in a particular way. Use them in that way. Also, build a common understanding of how you fight throughout your force. Initiative, aggressiveness, tenacity are possible when every soldier in your unit knows how his actions contribute to the operation as a whole. Further, they each believe that the success of the operation hinges on their own personal or small unit actions. Know how to get every asset into the fight. Make a mental inventory of the assets available to you; special munitions, sorties, attack helicopters, and of course the maneuver units. As you are thinking ahead in time, review this list for assets you still have available. Often, one unit, type of munition, or asset is still available that you can use to drive home your attack, isolate enemy forces in depth, or create new opportunities for action. The TAC should do this, but the commander must think ahead in time and space.

Know your enemy. Consider the capabilities of your opponent's most effective systems and minimize their impact on your forces to protect your combat power. For example, to reduce the effectiveness of attack helicopters with standoff weapons, use broken terrain that provides cover and concealment for your force. This will prevent the attack helicopters from getting sufficient time to track you and cause them to close within range of your air defense and direct-fire systems.

Consider the impact of weather as well as terrain. High winds can prevent helicopters from taking off. If these conditions exist, select a scheme of maneuver that otherwise might have been risky against attack helicopters. Finally, don't become predictable. Your opponent will learn your operating style and battle rhythm and find ways to minimize your strength and attack your vulnerabilities.

Seek a maneuver option. Isolate strength and attack weakness. If you can envelop your opponent, a deeper envelopment is always better and more effective. Remain flexible in your offensive and defensive plans so you can maneuver with your force to a position of advantage. Take risk. Most often the action that looks risky at first glance is really less risky than you think. Fix the enemy with a small part of your force, and maneuver the mass of your combat power to a position of advantage. Know what actions to take to turn a potential course of action from that of a gamble to one of acceptable risk. Most of the battles I fought without decisive results occurred when I chose a more conventional, safe maneuver option rather than one that was bold and unexpected.

Don't tip your hand. Retain the most flexible position with your force until you absolutely *must* make a decision. Allow more intelligence and combat information to come in and more situation development by units in contact. This is done by aggressive combat reconnaissance. Assume the enemy can see what you are doing unless you are absolutely sure he is blind. If you do conduct repositioning that sets your force in a position to execute one or two schemes of maneuver while eliminating a couple, look for indicators that the enemy saw your move. See if he has repositioned forces or failed to react to your deception measures. Do not, however, wait for "perfect information." Because the course of events will depend, in part, on enemy intentions, the commander, once he has considered the possibilities, must act boldly.

Deception can work. Keep deception plans simple and believable. Reinforce what the enemy is most likely to believe at the outset. In most cases at the tactical level, your deception efforts will get you only a few minutes of opportunity to exploit. Aim the majority of your deception efforts primarily at the individual, squad, and tank crew level. These men are the first to make contact with the enemy and the last to get the intel update or the satellite imagery. Fool them long enough to execute your plan and gain an advantage.

Above all, give credit for success to the fighting man. I have learned that all my battle command skill and expertise comes from the men who are in the fight. Their success, aggressiveness, and tactical skill create the opportunity for decisive action at my level. They, therefore, deserve to be led from the front by a leader who shares the pain of battle as well as the exhilaration of success.

Lessons of Maneuver

> *…adopting a scheme of maneuver that allows you the widest range of options, then keeping your forces balanced so any of those options are available to you.*[4]

All operations must include decisive, bold maneuver. I achieved greater success when the maneuver was more aggressive, deeper into the enemy flank, and violently executed. Your plan and unit must have the flexibility and agility to execute a scheme of maneuver that hits enemy weakness. Always look for the weakness in the enemy, and then concentrate your combat power at that point. Units must maneuver to gain a position of advantage in order to place effective direct fire on the enemy. Use the terrain that provides you the best opportunity to hit the enemy from an unexpected angle. Maneuver along unlikely axes of advance and avoid expected approaches. "Slow-go" terrain is really "go" when the enemy is not there. Force the enemy to fight in an area not of his choosing.

Always have a concept of the operation that includes multiple schemes of maneuver. The option selected depends on the initial disposition of the enemy and your assessment of his intentions. This "course of action" decision is often not made until contact with the enemy is achieved and the enemy commits to his own course of action. Multiple courses of action allow your unit to exploit the enemy's weakness. Rehearse all courses of action and clearly understand the criteria that will help you decide which one to execute. Keep all of your maneuver options available until you absolutely must commit. Then commit with all assets available. If no weakness is seen, then maneuver to the *ground* that offers the best advantage to your force. The best example of this last point is the North Wall of the central corridor, or the Washboard area at the NTC. The OPFOR regiment can fight more effectively in this terrain than the units it faces.

Truly effective defensive concepts include a fully developed scheme of maneuver. A defending unit must maneuver in order to mass its combat power against the enemy's main effort. An attacking force will have to mass, reveal its scheme of maneuver, the main effort, point of penetration, and economy of force sector. When that happens, the defender likewise can use a small force on the non-threatened flank and concentrate its combat power against the enemy. The repositioning defending forces do not go directly to the point of penetration, but build depth in the engagement area to extend the depth and mass of concentrated direct fire and force the attacker to fight in two or more directions simultaneously. Repositioning forces must take up positions that, in addition to building depth, build mutually supporting crossing, direct fires. Units with stabilized weapons systems should be prepared to attack boldly into the enemy flank to exploit the shock effect of their initial volleys. Force the enemy to fight in at least two directions. Many units fighting at the NTC have experienced a kill sack built around repositioning T80, BMP, AT5, 2A45M, AT3, and small arms fire. The combined effect of massed and distributed fires is devastating. Remember that depth extends toward the enemy. A counterattack launched forward of the defense into the enemy's flank builds depth.

"...All operations must include decisive bold maneuver..."

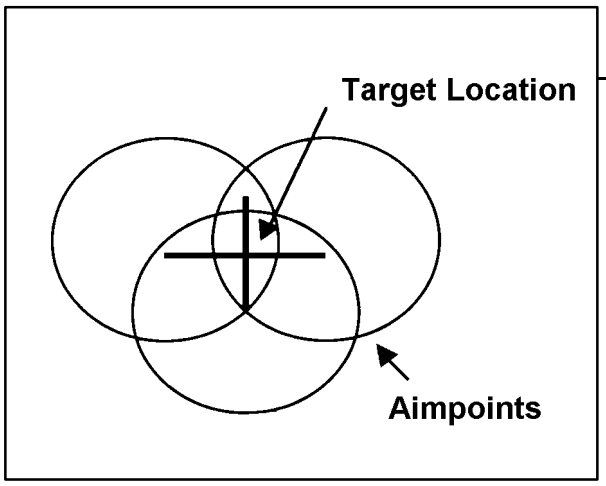
Light infantry units most often prepare defensive positions on the flanks of the battle positions, tying into terrain. Again, like the combat vehicles, if the infantry position is out of the fight, they must be prepared to remount and move to a position to contribute to the defense. Most defensive battles last long enough for this repositioning to occur in time for light infantry to rejoin the fight. Maneuver of dismounted infantry must always be a part of any plan and its branches or sequels.

All systems in the unit must maneuver. Tanks and IFVs attack to seek a flank or advantageous position. However, artillery, air defense, engineers, IEW, reconnaissance, and logistics must also move to concentrate their effects on the enemy. Everything masses. The standing order for every element in any maneuver-oriented formation is to go find and attack the enemy. All combat and combat support leaders must understand the concept of operation and take action to support the main effort. Do not sit on your objective or support by fire line if the enemy is not there and you are not contributing to the fight.

Lessons of Fires

Fires are effective when the concept of the operation and the scheme of maneuver are not described by the movement of units alone. Rather, fires and maneuver must be explained together in order to have a fully integrated concept. In addition, fires seem more effective when very top-driven. In the OPFOR, the concept of fires is developed to specifically support the scheme of maneuver of the regiment. The MRB commander gets little input into the scheme of fires. However, when the concept of fires is integrated into and strongly supports the regimental scheme of maneuver, the MRB commander will get the fires he needs, when he needs them, to accomplish his mission. The fires concept begins with the commander's guidance to ensure that fires and maneuver are mutually supporting. My criteria for fires is that the missions that get fired support the regimental scheme of maneuver, the main effort, that the target is massed, stationary, and in targetable terrain. If the call for fire does not meet these criteria, it probably will not be shot. The commander and FSO must really understand each other in the use of this criterion. The commander must clearly state where he wants the effects of fires. When the best massed, stationary target is not at the point of main effort, the commander may still want the suppressive effects of fire at that point to isolate enemy strength while maneuver forces attack weakness.

The concept of fires must be extremely simple and flexible. Having a small number of essential fire support tasks does this. This helps focus all of the fires



available to the unit on the most important part of the battlefield at the required time. Too many fire support tasks causes a smattering of fires all over the battlefield, rather than concentrated, massed effects at the decisive point. Someone in the formation will not get fires in his area. That is a fact. Commander's guidance must provide this focus. My guidance to my Armor lieutenant fire support officer included task and purpose for field artillery, CAS, and special munitions, generally by phase of fires or operation. This allowed him flexibility to maneuver field artillery assets as needed to support each phase and task to achieve the desired purpose. Commander's guidance and intent for fires should be very simple: fires are massed on large enemy formations on targetable terrain to support the maneuver of the regiment. Like the maneuver plan, fires must be flexible. Detailed targeting matrices based on an assumed, scripted-out enemy course of action are guaranteed not to survive contact with the enemy and often preclude effective integration of fire support into the overall concept.

Techniques of fire, however, add to the effectiveness, flexibility, and survivability of indirect fire assets. Understand the capabilities of the indirect fire weapons systems and use techniques of fire to increase their effectiveness. These techniques will also increase the effects of fires in support of the scheme of maneuver.

The multiple aimpoint technique of fire makes missions more effective. This technique uses three grid aimpoints to surround the target with fire, increasing the effects on the target. No matter how sophisticated targeting, ballistic computing, delivery systems, and smart munitions get, target location error will always be present. Using multiple aimpoints reduces the effect of target location error and maximizes the fire effects on the target. The technique is very simple: each firing battery fires at a grid 50 meters from the target, the effects of all three batteries overlap at the target grid. This technique of fire exists in the AFTADS and BCS systems as a "BCS Special." The figure at left shows how this looks.

Volume of fire is another technique of fire that is critically important. Fires must be massed; battalions must fire at targets. Very often at the NTC, we see units fire inadequate volumes of fire, failing to achieve the effects desired by the commander. Massed fires used with multiple aimpoints are very effective. Most often units will fire a target with multiple aimpoints with only one platoon of the firing battery. At a minimum use a battalion to fire this mission, one battery firing at one aimpoint. This ensures that killing effects are placed on the target. This may seem an inefficient use of assets, using battalions instead of platoons. However, if the commander's guidance and targeting criteria is being strictly followed, then battalions should be fired.

Volley fire is another very powerful technique. Volley firing all assets available to your unit puts massive effects on the enemy simultaneously. Volley fire is especially effective against high-payoff targets. Then integration of reconnaissance, intelligence, and electronic warfare are vital in this connection. These assets can, over time, report on the location of command posts, attack helicopter assembly areas, UAV ground-based control nodes, artillery observers, or any other high-payoff target. The fire support officer builds this target list and simultaneously strikes these targets at the right time for greatest effect on the enemy. Volley fire also protects the artillery systems by overloading the enemy's target acquisition system with too many targets, slowing or completely shutting down his counter-fire system.

Offensive fires incorporate the principles described above: massed fires, at a massed target, on known, targetable terrain. Fire employed any other way diffuses its effect for the unit. The key for the battle commander is to monitor the current execution of fires while anticipating where fires must focus for the next action. Anticipation is key. For effective fire to be available at the right place and in time, the commander must give the order, explain his intent and effects desired in time so that the staff can get to work. Also, with this lead time before execution, the XO and battle staff can orchestrate other combat power resources, CAS, EW, air defense, to further reinforce the maneuver action. Again, envisioning the development of the operation in time and space is vital.

Defensive fires are employed in much the same way with commander's guidance and target criteria. The subordinate units must provide the 10-digit, GPS grids to the target reference points in their defense. Additional TRPs — in deadspace, on avenues of approach, or at breach points — are also valuable. Unit observers can better call for fires when shifting from these known points. Very often, the enemy will unknowingly stop right next to a TRP. The TRP grids must be widely disseminated; the FSO must have them; all leaders down to TC level must post these TRPs on their maps. The MRB commander must ensure that he has an observation plan within his unit that covers all the TRPs. These known points dramatically increase the effectiveness of fires employed using the criteria described above.

Anticipating enemy action is slightly easier when you are defending. Once the enemy is fully committed and has revealed his concept, the commander again issues orders and intent for fire effects in order to mass effects in support of the defensive maneuver.

These techniques are not new or different. All exist in our doctrine. The fire support system must be very streamlined, flexible, focused on a small number of truly essential tasks, and closely monitored in execution. The desired effect is massed fires at the decisive point.

Lessons of Intelligence

> *The higher echelons are primarily concerned with the larger view; to them the problems that confront the battalion and the company are microscopic. But even when they do receive information of vital interest to the smaller front-line units, it seldom reaches those units in time to be of value.*[5]

Intelligence, of course, plays an essential role in battle command. The commander must be able to see and understand the enemy. Only when you can see the enemy, understand how he intends to fight, can a proper decision be made on your scheme of maneuver. Anticipating

and planning for multiple enemy courses of action and layered reconnaissance are the key components of battlefield intelligence. The OPFOR *fights* the *enemy* as we see him; we do not rigidly expect a single enemy course of action. Developing multiple enemy COAs builds flexibility into our plans. Seeing the enemy, reconnaissance, is vital.

Layered reconnaissance is a powerful part of OPFOR tactics, and it makes a lot of sense. Every level of command in the OPFOR has reconnaissance. Divisional and regimental reconnaissance assets see the entire enemy force, providing the regimental commander the information he needs for the COA decision. The MRBs employ combat reconnaissance patrols, usually 45 minutes ahead of their main body, that answer their combat information requirements. Forward patrols are often used at the MRC level to see the enemy before making physical contact, and allow the MRC commander to develop the situation and maneuver to a position of advantage. Therefore, each level of command sees the enemy in time to make maneuver decisions, rather than blindly executing a specific plan. Each reconnaissance unit is a "connecting file" with the unit forward of it and is capable of developing the situation forward to effect battle handover. The OPFOR desert lore says "don't go anywhere for the first time."

Knowing how the enemy fights, as well as how you fight, helps you see patterns of operations. By understanding the effects of time, distance, terrain, and the doctrine and capabilities of your enemy, you can anticipate his actions. This knowledge reduces uncertainty and allows for more aggressive offensive action against him.

Scouting is the key to effective reconnaissance. Scouts and all other reconnaissance and intelligence collecting assets must position themselves on the battlefield and survive to give real-time information on the enemy. Scouts, GSR teams, engineer reconnaissance, and ADA scouts must all be expert in infiltration techniques to get into sector and to their assigned "sets."

Scouts must be expert in reconnaissance techniques: single vehicle infiltration, use of terrain, low illumination, waiting until late at night when vigilance is low, modifying routes based on intelligence already gathered. Basic tactical procedures such as PCI for no light sources, radio listening silence, reporting on a time schedule, secure communications, alternating patterns of operations, and reporting are all truly important to reconnaissance success.

Though this is heresy, I forbade my S2 from briefing NAIs and TAIs. We did not use a single situation template per se, but multiple enemy courses of action. We concentrated on what enemy actions we needed to see, rather than focusing recon assets on seemingly arbitrary pieces of terrain. The number and composition, location, direction of movement of every company team was what I needed to see. I limited the S2 to a very small number of reconnaissance objectives that answered my needs to make the scheme of maneuver and fires decision. The danger is that a commander will assume an enemy course of action and try to see too many things. For successful battle command, I learned to sharply focus all intelligence assets on the specific information I needed to make my decisions.

Radio Electronic Combat or IEW is an extremely powerful tool and is also integrated into the fight in accordance with the commander's concept of the operation. The work of collectors and jammers can contribute to the effectiveness of all operating systems. Maneuver is facilitated through deception traffic passed over both friendly and enemy radio nets that supports the actual course of action. Fires are enhanced through ICD measures that expose enemy forces to fire, and jamming that disrupts voice and digital fire support transmissions or air defense warning nets. Command and control is aided by collecting on the enemy jammers hitting friendly nets, and providing targetable data to our artillery to kill those jammers. Further, ICD keeps enemy jamming off of friendly nets by sustaining traffic on the net being jammed while the MRB jumps to its next clear frequency.

Deception works. Army doctrine is very good in that all the things you must do to make deception work are correct. The deception effort has to be integrated with the scheme of maneuver, a story for each scheme. The commander must dedicate resources to make the deception realistic. Expect that the deception effect will be brief and must be effective against crews, platoons, and companies.

Lessons of Air Defense

An aggressive posture ensures more effective air defense. When attacking, moving to positions that offer air defense protection expands and enhances the protection more than simply orienting on the friendly main body. Air IPB is critical in air attack tactics. Understanding the capabilities of the air platform, the method of employment, and the terrain that supports their employment identifies the sets for the SHORAD systems. As the main body advances, these teams must bound ahead to maintain their coverage. All-arms air defense means every direct fire system can kill aircraft. Because of the devastating effect attack helicopters can have, every weapon must engage when it encounters aircraft within its range. Very often attack helicopters will come too close to their target due to terrain, making them vulnerable. The OPFOR has repeatedly destroyed AH-64s with small arms, VIPER, and Dragon fire. The ADA commander must understand the commander's concept of the operations, track the battle, and take initiative to shift assets based on the situation.

Passive measures are critically important to any force, particularly when stationary. Dispersion and the use of terrain to enhance camouflage are mandatory when facing a sophisticated air threat. These hides, in addition to passive air defense, can also sell the deception story. Moving to several hide sites over time increases protection and will support the deception story. Maneuver can increase air attack effectiveness by using terrain that provides protection, and draws aviation, particularly attack helicopters, into the range of our air defense systems. Unit commanders and the ADA commander must conduct a joint air IPB in order to coordinate hides with ADA protection and positioning. This ensures mutual support from both units' capabilities, establishing proper air attack coverage. Additionally, this coordination can assist the air attack commander in developing his air defense engagement areas. Again, battle drills are vital. Units must be capable of moving dispersed, then rapidly concentrating in time for the close fight.

Mobility/Countermobility Lessons

Use of all time available is the most important battle command factor of this operating system. Unit commanders must never allow engineer assets to sit idle. SOPs, rapid planning, recon, decisions, and siting must happen in order to maximize engineer assets. The engineer effort must support the commander's concept of the operation so it is integrated into the scheme of fire and maneuver. Engineer commander status must be one of a peer commander with the maneuver unit commanders. His input on routes of march, situational obstacle emplacement, EA development, obstacle composition and siting is crucial. This is best done by

early integration in the planning process, and treating this commander as a peer.

Combat Service Support Lessons

Lessons of Combat Service Support are few and far between in the OPFOR. Generally, our logistics functions are not competitive during the rotation. Consequently, we have not learned the hard lessons of building and rebuilding combat power, casualty evacuation, rear area protection, and the myriad of other actions required to logistically sustain operations.

Lessons of Command and Control

Commander's intent is really only effective when the unit is trained, has effective SOPs and uses them, and has a common understanding on how the unit as a whole fights. The common understanding is really the key. This understanding and the empowerment of commander's intent comes with repetitive "combat" experiences. When facing a developing situation on the battlefield, a junior leader can only act within the commander's intent when he knows what his decision and actions mean to the regiment. He has an understanding of what is possible and can answer the "if-then" question; if I do this, then I can accomplish my task and purpose and meet the commander's intent. He can then confidently act within commander's intent and retain or seize the initiative.

Our doctrine for commander's intent is really very good. The intent statement in the order must be a very concise statement of purpose, method, and end state. It cannot include specific information by BOS more applicable to commander's planning guidance. Again, the foundation for making intent effective is a fully trained unit with a common understanding of how the unit fights. Then purpose, method, and end state becomes a useful expression of the commander's vision of the battle, how he sees it unfolding, and the effects he is trying to achieve.

Commander's intent must operate during the battle, not just in the planning stage. As the situation develops, the commander's estimate of the situation and actions required will change. The commander must inform his subordinates of changes to his intent during the fight *in time* for them to execute. Warning orders and FRAGOs are a good way to do this. This requires commanders to focus on their responsibilities: see the enemy, see yourself, and see the terrain. Clausewitz observed that war is a "continuous interaction of opposites." Think about what is happening to the enemy, his action or inaction, what your force is doing, its combat power, and look ahead in time for actions to impose your will on the enemy. The commander must think at this level in order to see opportunities, issue FRAGOs that begin to set conditions for the next major action of his force, and then execute the FRAGO.

How the tactical operations center is organized and functions will determine how effective synchronization of all BOS will be. My gut feeling is that the current TOC/TAC organization in our doctrine really does not help synchronization. The brigade or battalion executive officer should be in charge of the TAC. With him is the FSCOORD, S2, S3 Air, ALO, MI CO/TM commander, ABE. They move to a position that provides effective communications and, if possible, a view of the battlefield. The executive officer controls the actions of all these players to synchronize battlefield effects. They are all face to face, using a common map to track friendly and enemy forces. The brigade or battalion commander and S3 are forward on the battlefield where they can see the critical points. The battle captains in all sections man the TOC. They battle track, work coordination issues identified by the TAC, maintain communications with higher headquarters, continue planning future operations, and prepare to pick up the battle if the TAC is destroyed or moving. The role of the commander, XO, and S3 support this arrangement. The commander is forward at the decisive point where he can make a relevant decision and executes with the help of the S3. The XO is at the TAC monitoring the whole zone and orchestrating all of the units' combat systems, integrating them under the commander's concept.

This organization of the TAC makes synchronization happen. Leaving the XO in the TOC to battle track and conduct the "deep battle" is ineffective. He and the battle staff must coordinate battlefield activities to support the integrated close and "deep" battle. The best place to do that is forward where they can see and talk.

Crosstalk among subordinate commanders is an extremely powerful battlefield action. To encourage your commanders to crosstalk on your net, you must discipline yourself to be quiet. Issue your orders, convey your intent, then monitor and talk only when necessary. That way the men in contact with the enemy, who know what is possible, can talk to each other to the benefit of the whole unit. The leader in contact with the enemy must be encouraged to make a recommendation on the course of action. Commanders who direct the movements of individual vehicles crush initiative and the willingness of commanders to crosstalk.

The commander's role, as alluded to above, is to command a lot and control just enough. He must be forward where he can see the action, to make his judgment as to what is possible. Monitor the current execution while thinking ahead in time for the next action you want to take. You can't do this if you are directing B22 into a firing position. Therefore, learn how to position yourself forward to see, survive, and command. The old maxims here are generally true. Move with a unit so it can provide you security. When you go to a position, know where the closest tank or IFV is that offers you protection. Stay away from prominent, targetable terrain, get just high enough. A single vehicle in a good set in the flats is more survivable than sitting on top of a hill. Reposition often to stay with the action and to avoid being targeted. Above all, be forward, far forward where your main effort is fighting, where you can make immediate assessments and issue orders to take advantage of fleeting windows of opportunity.

Summary

> *We have identified danger, physical exertion, intelligence, and friction as the elements that coalesce to form the atmosphere of war, and turn it into a medium that impedes activity. In their restrictive effects, they can be grouped into a single concept of general friction. Is there any lubricant that will reduce this abrasion? Only one, and a commander and his army will not always have it readily available: combat experience.*[6]

These comments are provided for what they are worth. I was fortunate enough to command at the NTC for two years, enjoying the chance to lead or participate in tactical operations conducted in the most realistic training environment available every month. Experience is the best teacher, the most efficient lubricant to overcome the friction of war, as noted by Clausewitz. The NTC is a simulation and one could question the value of my experience on those grounds. However, the Army is training more and more through

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simulation with computer-generated graphics and combat results. If experience gained at the NTC is questionable, then the value, credibility, and relevance of virtual simulation is probably more suspect. All that aside, repetitive, tough, realistic training is the best way to build in commanders the skills of battle command.

Notes

[1]Franks, Frederick M., GEN, "Battle Command," *Military Review*, U.S. Command and General Staff College, May-June1996, p. 14.

[2]Harmon, E.N., MG, *Notes on Combat Experience during the Tunisian and African Campaigns,* undated memorandum, p. 1.

[3]*Operations, FM 100-5,* Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington D.C., 1993, p. G-1.

[4]Ibid, p. 21.

[5]*Infantry In Battle,* The Infantry Journal Incorporated, Washington D.C., 1939, p. 343.

[6]Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War,* Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976, p. 122.

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